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Kim Chi Ha

Kim Chi Ha, 34, is on trial for his life. He has been charged with violating Article 4, Sections 1 and 2, of the Anti-Communist Law. Reports from Seoul indicate that the Park regime intends to convict and execute Kim. Here is a brief review of events in the case.

- Feb. 15 Released from prison after serving 10 months in connection with the National League of Democratic Youth and Students' case.
- Feb. 25-27 Article "Asceticism 1974" appeared in the Tonga Ilbo. Kim revealed that the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) was a government fabrication and PRP members' confessions were obtained by torture.
- Mar. 13 Kim rearrested.
- April 4 Ministry of Culture and Information issued a 100-page pamphlet of the evidence against Kim.
- May 10 Seoul District Court announced that it would apply Article 9, Section 2 of the Anti-Communist Law to Kim. Under this provision, a second offender may receive the death penalty rather than the standard maximum penalty of 7 years at hard labor.
- May 19 At his first trial session Kim denounced the court as prejudiced and asserted that he would not receive a fair trial.

Kim was rearrested because he courageously published information he learned in prison about the PRP fabrication (KN, Mar. 15, 1975). The PRP case was so sensitive that the government summarily executed eight prisoners on April 9 to quell protests and block further inquiries. Two missionaries, George Ogle and James Sinott, have been expelled because of their belief that the PRP charges were untrue. The Tonga Ilbo was silenced for printing accurate news about the case. The arrests of Korea National Council of Churches (KNCC) leaders in April was partly because of Christian support for the PRP wives and demands for a retrial. Now the government is punishing Kim Chi Ha for his disclosures.

The state's principal piece of evidence against Kim is a memorandum he wrote in prison. KN has learned that this memorandum was dictated by the prosecutor. Kim wrote down what he was told to. This was evident from the style and content of the document. One can imagine all too vividly the duress that preceded the dictation.

The ruling that Kim was subject to the death sentence as a "second offender" was typical of a Park Chung Hee court. Kim was previously charged under the Anti-Communist Law in June, 1970 when he was indicted for the poem "Five Bandits." However, the proceed-

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ings were suspended because of Kim's health and he was released to a hospital in Masan. Kim was never formally convicted. In any honest judicial system, of course, he never even would have been indicted.

Kim's "second offender" status is because he offended Park Chung Hee again. The court was fully aware that he had not been convicted before but ruled for the death penalty because higher authorities are demanding Kim's life. Park Chung Hee's animosity to Kim Chi Ha is well-known; Park intends to silence Kim the same way he destroyed the PRP prisoners. In response to a last-minute appeal to spare the prisoners' lives, Park reportedly smiled and said, "It will scare the hell out of them" (Honneya twoemnida).

* * *

Kim Chi Ha is the spirit of the Korean resistance. His writing rings with conviction and justice. His poems and commitment have inspired others to dedicated sacrifice. The lines in "Asceticism 1974" proclaim a code of honor for the anti-Park movement.

My blood cries out
Reject
Every lie and falsehood
Reject them.

His artistic passion and talent are the voice of Korea. To silence Kim Chi Ha is to rip out a million Korean tongues. He must be saved.

Korean and Japanese intellectuals held a 48-hour hunger strike at Sukiyabashi Park, Ginza, from May 17. The protest was to promote international support for Kim. The group called upon the Japanese government to suspend economic aid to the Park regime. The protesters included Ōe Kenzaburō, Matsugi Nobuhiko, and Kim Tal Su. The hunger strike was widely covered by Japanese press and television. On May 19 a petition was presented to Premier Miki's secretary and the group was promised that the prime minister would receive it.

Americans should be ashamed that their government supports the dictator Park against the poet Kim. The regime's intention of killing Kim Chi Ha shows its corrupt viciousness more directly than even the poet's eloquent denunciations. If Kim is convicted, will the U.S. State Department express its "regrets" but secretly be pleased that a "threat" to U.S. security is gone?

We call upon Americans to join the campaign to free Kim in the same spirit as the following cable from Norman Mailer to the International Committee for the Release of Kim Chi Ha.

"Kim Chi Ha is a poet with a serious gift of metaphor and a clear eye. His sense of revolution is religious and democratic. His comprehension of social change as embodied in his concept of the 'curse' is profound. It is a measure of the tyranny of the Government of South Korea that such a poet and democrat has been arrested for communism and is at present under possible sentence of death. What a surprise to the world if the Government of South Korea would exhibit some evidence that it has learned the lessons of South Vietnam. What a miracle if my own country has learned the same lesson and brings pressure to bear on the Government of South Korea to release Kim Chi Ha.

Norman Mailer

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"National Security" and the Ninth Decree

On May 13 President Park proclaimed presidential emergency decree No. Nine. The measure prohibits any activity to oppose Park's Yushin Constitution: "to assert, petition, instigate, or propagate constitutional revision through assembly, demonstrations, or mass media as newspapers, broadcasts, and news agencies" is forbidden. Suspected violators are subject to arrest, detention, and search or seizure without a warrant. Orders or measures implementing the decree are not subject to judicial review.

Article 3 of the decree attempted to stop the flight of wealth from S. Korea, a frenetic reaction to Indochina. The transfer of property out of S. Korea or the concealment or disposal of property in foreign countries is forbidden. Seoul's elite were buying trucks and converting ROK currency to U.S.\$ and gold--a reported \$100 million in a few weeks--in a panicky show of no-confidence in the government.

The decree followed a two-week scenario. President Park kicked it off with a television speech on April 29 calling for "broad national cooperation for security" and warning of "mounting threats of aggression from North Korea." Dozens of newspaper advertisements by companies and organizations suddenly appeared castigating the "mounting war provocations by the north Korean Communist puppet regime." University students held campus rallies to "devote themselves to national security." On May 11 the rightist Korean Christian Salvation Mission sponsored a prayer meeting by 5,000 faithful at the Imjingak Pavilion south of the Demilitarized Zone. Miss Park Keun-hye, eldest daughter of President Park and honorary chairperson of the rally, led the prayers for the "consolidation of national unity." The day before, May 10, a reported 1.4 million citizens assembled at Yoido in Seoul to call for "national solidarity and the unification of national opinion."

These "spontaneous rallies" were staged by the government. Quotas were levied on companies, organizations, and districts of Seoul. The entire administrative structure of Seoul is tightly controlled by the state. From the ku, tong, and t'ong levels down to the pan of five or six families, each leader is appointed by the government and has to cooperate with the police and KCIA. To turn out a crowd for a "national security rally," the Seoul authorities assign quotas to the ward which are passed down to the family organizations. Anyone who refuses to participate is liable to harassment, even dismissal from his job for a lack of patriotism.

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The common theme of Park's speech, official statements, and the mass rallies was "aggression from the North." A May 13 advertisement by the Bankers' Association of Korea stated, "the north Korean puppet regime, encouraged by the Indochina situation, is escalating reckless acts of provocation against the south in an unprecedented manner...."

Curiously enough, however, only the Park regime could see those "reckless acts." The U.S. Embassy and Headquarters, U.S. Forces Korea, both stated in Seoul that there had been no military moves by N. Korea whatsoever. A State Department spokesman in Washington on May 14, one day after Park's decree No. Nine, stated that the "U.S. Government does not believe there has been a fundamental change in the security situation on the Korean Peninsula."

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Park Chung Hee has an exaggerated fear of an attack from the north because of his genuine fear of an attack from the south--by his own people. The ROK army units north of Seoul have been denied certain kinds of weapons and equipment because of apprehension that they will lead a coup. Instead of equipping these units, Park's Praetorian guard, the Capitol Division, is fully armed. This vulnerability along the demilitarized zone accounts for the hallucinations in the Blue House.

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Will the restrictions on moving wealth out of S. Korea apply retroactively? For example, Pres. Park violated the law when he purchased 340 acres of land worth \$11 million in the resort area of Nasu in Japan. The site, near a villa owned by the Japanese imperial family, is registered in the name of a Mr. Machii, a Korean who heads the Tokyo Mafia. Machii purchased the land in 1972 with a ¥5,400 million loan from the Japan Real Estate Bank. The loan was guaranteed by the Tokyo branch of the Korean Exchange Bank. The transaction was questioned in the Diet on November 13, 1973. At a session of the Lower House Audit Committee a Dietmember asked why a Japanese bank would extend such credit to an individual without the apparent ability to repay a loan.

Former KCIA director Lee Hu Rak is another of S. Korea's robber barons. When he divorced his wife in 1973, Lee paid her a 5,000 million won settlement. Why such generosity? She threatened to reveal the details of his Swiss bank accounts. Park and Lee are only the most notorious malefactors of wealth in S. Korea. KN has learned from reliable sources in Seoul that a passenger plane is kept ready 24-hours a day to evacuate the regime's VIPs "in case of necessity."

Decree No. Nine is sheer hypocrisy. The criminal corruption of the Park administration is well-known. The government has no moral authority to ask obedience to a law which national leaders have and are egregiously breaking.

The political provisions of the decree are equally untenable. Many S. Koreans are opposed to communism and the North because of a conviction that there will be no civil liberties under communism. But in the name of anti-communism, the S. Korean government has already eliminated all civil liberties. This is the irony and the fatal weakness of Park's brand of anti-communism. The more repressive the regime becomes, the less reason there is to support it. Why should any citizen sacrifice his life for a government of plutocratic fascists? Patriotism and the will to resist flourish only where a government has earned the respect of the populace. Does the Park administration have that respect? Obviously not. Otherwise it would not have to silence the press, censor all news about Korea, and keep the people ignorant of domestic and international events. It would not be afraid to hold elections, to permit the people to select their own leaders. And it would not have to manipulate the public with phony advertisements, political circuses like the Yoido rally, and fabrications like the PRP case.

Killing innocent persons as "communists" only spreads the disaffection and hatred of Park's rule. The people begin to think, "any enemy of this vicious regime may be our friend." The people know that Park's enemies did not extort \$4 million from Gulf Oil and do not sell Korean daughters into prostitution. One day the voice of the people will be heard in S. Korea.